

# IN FOCUS

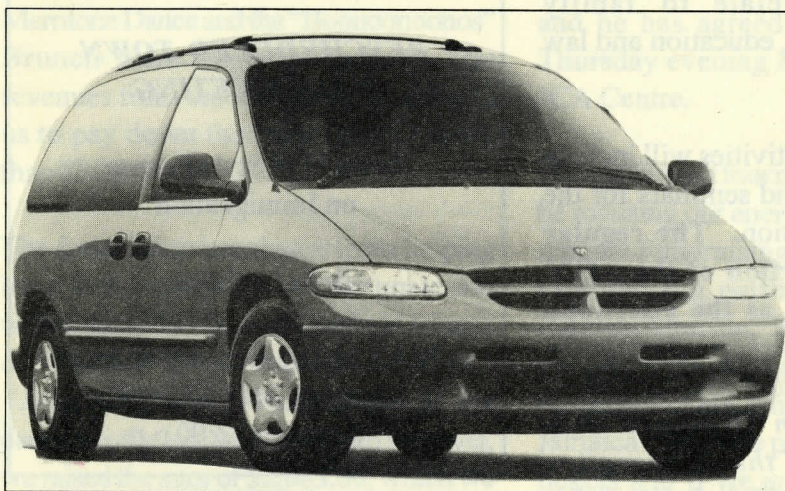
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of the Jamaican  
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May 2000

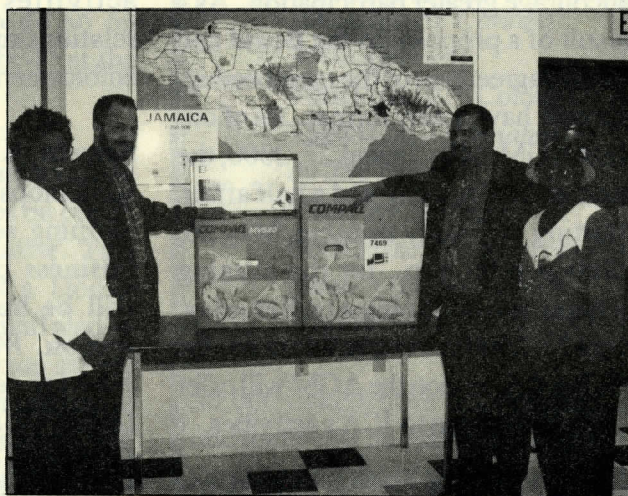
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SERVING THE BLACK AND CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY FOR OVER 37 YEARS

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Above: First Prize New 2000 Dodge Caravan!!



Third Prize: Personal pentium computer!!

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**\*\*NEW FORMAT\*\***

Now being held on Friday and Saturday

FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2000 - 6:00 P.M.  
and

SAT., MAY 27, 2000 - 9:00 A.M.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
HAS NEW FORMAT - (See Page 2)

For further information,  
call the JCA at (416) 746-5772

## JCA LAUNCHES YEAR 2000 CAR RAFFLE

How does owning a brand new 2000 Dodge Caravan, six-seater minivan sound to you? Can't afford it! Think again. How does owning this same minivan for the measly cost of \$5.00 sound to you? Now, you're thinking!! Owning this vehicle may be the simplest thing you do this year.

As the Jamaican Canadian Association continues to look progressively into the future, we continue to seek and use innovative ways to fundraise. Revenues from these fundraising events are used to pay down the huge mortgage on our building. With that in mind, this year's Car Raffle was launched on Saturday, April 30, 2000 at the JCA Centre.

This year's first prize, a Dodge Caravan Minivan comes fully loaded. Prizes available to be won are as follows::

First Prize: 2000 Dodge Caravan Minivan  
(Co-Sponsored by Agincourt Chrysler, Inc.)

Second Prize Caribbean Cruise for 2  
(Donated by Vincent & Fay Conville)

Continued...Page 3



# Editorial

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HAS A NEW FORMAT

Since the inception of the JCA, our Annual General Meetings have been, for the most part, 4 to 6 hour affairs. These were usually held on Sunday afternoons. It became clear that the format needed to be changed to encourage greater participation. As a result of a proposal to the Board and the full agreement of the membership, we now have a new format. As of our next AGM, May 26 and 27, 2000, the format will be a day and a half affair. Starting on Friday evening, May 26, 2000 at 6:00 p.m., for the evening session and continuing on Saturday, May 27, 2000 starting at 9:00 a.m., for the full day session the AGM will offer a new dimension to JCA's activities.

Upon approval by the Board and the membership, a committee was put in place to structure the activities for the new format. The committee is excited about the plans that are now in place and anticipates the full participation of the membership. As with anything else, things change and as we have all come through the last year with great anticipation for the new millennium, the committee sees this change as another expansion of the JCA meeting the needs of its mandate to the community.

The activities for the weekend are designed to keep people involved. The Friday evening session will constitute an Open House and Reception showcasing JCA's activities and how the community can become more involved. There will be the unveiling of the new and exciting Website, as well as detailed explanations of the changes and additions to the various programs offered through the JCA. The newly launched video "*Freshies*" produced

by JCA and funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada will be showcased. This exceptionally hilarious and informative video will go to the core of some of JCA's activities, particularly as the activities relate to family relationships, education and law enforcement.

Saturday's activities will include workshops and seminars for the morning session. **The regular business portion of the AGM will be held as the afternoon session.** *Workshop topics for the morning session will include an Immigration Dialogue with members of the Immigration Department. This Immigration workshop is replacing the Town Hall Meeting originally scheduled for February 10, 2000, which was cancelled due to inclement weather. This workshop will be held in the form of a Town Hall Meeting.* There will also be a workshop on Stress Management.

During the Saturday afternoon session, Board members will present their Annual Reports to the membership. Election of new officers for the year 2000/2001 will then be held.

Your attendance and participation at these events will ensure the usual success of JCA's Annual General Meetings, as we initiate this new format. We look forward to your presence and participation.



## ASK THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT

### RESCHEDULED TOWN HALL MEETING

#### Town Hall Style Forum on Immigration

To be held at the

JCA's Annual General Meeting  
Saturday, May 27, 2000  
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

IN  
**FOCUS**

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Canadian Association, 995  
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(416) 746-5772, Fax: (416) 746-7035

#### Board of Directors:

Herman Stewart, President  
Valarie Steele, Vice-President  
Maxine Adams, Treasurer  
Elaine Thompson, Executive Director  
Hector Gray, Executive Secretary  
Francella Moore, Membership Services Committee  
Claudette Cameron-Stewart  
Public Reltns. Committee  
Patricia Williams, Fundraising Chair  
Uriel Soares, Building Committee  
Vincent Conville, Education Committee  
Pam Powell, Women's Com. Rep.  
Ansel Bather, Youth Affairs Committee  
Ruth Morris, Senior's Group Rep.

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Graham, Claudette Cameron Stewart, Elaine  
Thompson, Herman Stewart, Carol  
Plunkett, Buelah Campbell

**Newsletter Layout:** Robert Small  
Letters and submissions welcome. The  
Editorial Committee reserves the right to  
edit materials for length.

# President's Report

By Herman Stewart

As I reflect on our activities and accomplishments during the past year, it is a pleasure for me to report to you that it has indeed been a very successful year and that this success is continuing.

During the last quarter we focused mainly on fundraising activities. Both the Merritone Dance and the "Boonoonoonos" Brunch were huge successes. The revenues from these two events allowed us to pay down the bank loan by more than \$20,000.00.

The Association has always lent a helping hand to those who are less fortunate and with this tradition in mind; we held a dance on March 4<sup>th</sup> to raise funds to establish a "Distress Fund". Attendance at the dance was far less than expected, however, we raised the sum of \$2,083.00, which we used to open an account at the Royal Bank. We now have a Board of Trustees in place and it is currently working to establish a set of by-laws to govern the administration of the fund.

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, we have changed the format for our upcoming Annual General Meeting. I fully support these changes which will allow for more member participation.

We have six important positions on the Board to be filled, and I am hoping for a good attendance at the Annual General Meeting. It is not too late to nominate someone for a committee. Please provide the Nominating Committee with this information by calling (416) 746-5772 and leaving a message for Pauline Reid, the Chair of the committee.

The Vice President, Valarie Steele and I met with the New Police Chief, Julian Fantino recently. We raised several issues

with him such as "overpolicing" of our youths, the police reluctance to cooperate with the SIU, recruitment, retention and promotion of minorities within the police services. We extended an invitation to the Chief to meet with our community and he has agreed to do so on Thursday evening May 4<sup>th</sup> at the JCA Centre.

During the next four months we will be focusing our energies on our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fundraising Raffle. This year the big prize is a Dodge Caravan Minivan. We will also be giving a prize to the person selling the most tickets, which is a trip to Jamaica. We have printed 50,000 tickets and if we are able to sell them all, then we will be able to meet one of our major goals of paying down the bank loan by at least half, before the mortgage is up for renewal in March 2001.

I continue to speak out on the issues impacting our communities and during the past month I have given several media interviews, including appearances on radio phone-in programs.

Our immigration forum had to be cancelled because of bad weather. It has been rescheduled for Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, during our Annual General Meeting. I would like to extend an invitation to all readers of this newsletter who are not members to come and join us. Unity is strength, and together we can achieve much.

## Raffle...continued

Third Prize: Personal  
Pentium Computer –  
(Donated by Western  
Union & Nicey's Food  
Mart)

Fourth Prize: Airline  
tickets for 2 to Jamaica –  
(Donated by Canada  
3000 Airlines)

Fifth Prize: 27" Colour  
Television – (Donated  
by Joy Foods

Catering Service)  
Sixth Prize: Microwave  
Oven – (Donated by  
Karl & Son)

50,000 tickets have been printed and there will be many prizes and surprises for those selling tickets. The prize for Top Ticket Seller will be a trip to Jamaica Courtesy of Speedfreight Forwarding.

Tickets will be distributed based on geographic regions with a coordinator for each region. You can help us to surpass ticket sales of our previous raffle by purchasing tickets as gifts for family and friends.

So, you think we have forgotten? No we just held you in suspense to the last line. THE OFFICIAL DRAW will take place on Saturday, September 9, 2000 at a dance to be held at the Jamaican Canadian Association's Centre.

Purchase your tickets and see you at the draw on Saturday, September 9, 2000. GOOD LUCK EVERYONE!!!



# Welcome to the JCA Team

## Beverley A. Thompson Volunteer Coordinator

My name is Beverley A. Thompson and I attended Excelsior High School in Kingston, Jamaica, Seneca College in the Executive Secretarial Diploma Program (Honours); Career Canada Inc. Diploma (Honours) Medical Lab Technician; Canadian Aesthetics Academy (Diploma - Honours)

I migrated to Canada in 1977 and presently I am a self-employed Aesthetician. My career history includes being a Lab Technician at MedChem Laboratories, Assistant to the President at Congas Engineering Canada Ltd., former Engineering Consulting Division of Consumers Gas.

My volunteer experience includes 1991 to 1993 - Black Business and Professional Association, member of the organizing committee for the Harry Jerome Awards Dinner. 1988 to present, member of the Heritage Singers. My hobbies are reading, knitting and crocheting. Some of my other interests are sports in general, but a particular passion for baseball. I dislike habitual lateness and my best decision has been to become self-employed.

My goal is to use my time and effort in the hope that one day someone will smile and say, "you have contributed to something special in my life."

## Errol Bonner - ISAP Counsellor

As the new Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) Counsellor, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am

looking forward with great expectation for your support in the challenge of conducting settlement outreach to churches and the extended community over the next year.

I immigrated to Canada in 1982 and was employed as a Youth worker for twelve years and acted as Executive Director for three of those years at Syme/Woolner Neighbourhood & Family Centre. In 1984, I was presented with a certificate of honour for outstanding commitment as a youth worker by Metropolitan Toronto Council.

I was Born in Kingston, Jamaica and migrated to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1972 where I obtained a Bachelors degree in Social Work. I married a wonderful person twenty years ago, who is now the Program Manager of a community social agency in the old City of York. The father of five, one of whom (my eldest) will graduate this year with a Bachelor of Education degree and a Bachelor of Arts-Specialized Honours in Geography.

I ran for the position of School Trustee in Ward 7 of the old City of York in the 1994 municipal election and finished a close second. I have sat on a number of Boards and Committees, some of which include the former City of York Agency and Social Planning Council, former City of York Board of Education Co-operative Education Advisory Committee, Rockcliffe Middle School Advisory Council, Lambton

Park Community School Safety and Security Committee and I am presently sports Coordinator for Commonwealth Sports Club, one of the oldest cricket clubs in Canada.

In the summer of 1986, I had the opportunity to coordinate and manage the biggest multicultural music festival ever held in the old City of York that still continues yearly. My hobbies include collecting records, sports, reading and cooking.

## **TWO FRIENDS PRODUCTIONS**

*In Association with JCA's  
Mother's Day Brunch*

Proudly presents

## **GIMME LIFE**

A Special Mother's Day  
Presentation  
Sunday, May 14 2:00 p.m.  
JCC 995 Arrow Road

*Starring  
Gloria Surage, Judy 'Pye'  
Cox, Naggo Morris, Oswin  
Taylor and Gerry Thompson*

**Tickets for Brunch  
and Show - \$35**

**Tickets for Brunch  
ONLY - \$20**

**Tickets for the Show  
ONLY - \$20**

*Gloria Surage & Judy "Pye"  
Cox will sign autographs  
during the brunch*

# Candidates for Board Positions

## PRESIDENT

**Herman Stewart (Incumbent)**  
Mediator, Ontario Ministry of Labour

Herman has been a member of the Jamaican Canadian Association for the past 19 years. He has been a member of the Board of Directors in the following capacities, President, First Vice President, Chairperson of Education, Fundraising, General Purposes and Building committees.

During the past four years, he served as President of the Association. Herman has also served on the Board of Governors of George Brown College and as Vice President on the Board of the Ontario Federation of Labour.

For the past ten years, Herman has worked as a mediator with the Ontario Ministry of Labour. Prior to joining the government service, he served as head of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union.

Herman is a recipient of the Ministry of Citizenship volunteer award.

## EXECUTIVE SECRETARY **Hector Gray (Incumbent)**

Hector is a retired municipal clerk. He worked for the City of York for 23 years, including a position as secretary to City Council. Hector is a long-standing member of JCA and is a past chair of the Building Committee and a Caravan mayor.

## FUNDRAISING **Barbara Thomas**

Barbara has been an active JCA member for over 20 years. She has served on the Board of Directors in the capacities of Membership and Social Committee Chair. She now works with various groups inside the organization.

Barbara's goal is to strengthen the short and long-term goals set out by the outgoing Chair and committee members. Also, to work rigorously with the Corporate Fundraising Committee in an effort to achieve the organization's financial goals.

## EDUCATION

**Barrington A. Morrison**

Barrington has been a member of the Education Committee since 1996 and has been a member of the JCA since 1982. He has worked with other members of the committee to organize community events, evaluate and make recommendations for JCA's Saturday Morning Tutorial Program. He was a member of the Board of Directors, Jane-Finch Adult Education and Training Centre from 1997-1998.

He teaches Grades 6 to 9 at Beverly Heights Middle School in Toronto and has both Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) and Education degrees from York University. He is a member of National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

In his own words, Barrington says "My profile includes solid interpersonal, planning, strategic-thinking and performance-management skills, and the ability to work effectively with colleagues in identifying and responding strategically to emerging needs and issues."

Barrington welcomes the opportunity to contribute his knowledge and experience to

enriching the organization.

**ANGELA ROYES**  
**No Bio Submitted**

**RICARDO TOMLINSON**  
**No Bio submitted**

## YOUTH AFFAIRS COMMITTEE **Patrick Chambers**

Patrick is 31 years old and has been associated with the JCA Youth Affairs Committee since its formation.

He holds a Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering from Ryerson Polytechnic University and currently works in the construction industry. In his spare time he is an aspiring businessman who recently started his own Home Renovation Consultation business. Along with this he is also enrolled in a Project Management Certificate Programme at Ryerson.

Patrick's ultimate goal is to obtain a Masters Certificate in Project Management at York University followed by a Masters in Project Management/MBA at George Washington University.

## MEMBERSHIP SERVICES COMMITTEE **Karen Smith**

Karen was born in St. Mary, Jamaica and immigrated to Canada in 1989. She is currently employed with Famous Players Inc. with an assigned position as the Theatre Payroll Supervisor, for out theatre staff of over 7000.

Karen is presently the Treasurer of Independent Promotions, responsible for the planning and execution of the Jamaica Independence Day celebrations. She has produced and directed Miss Jamaica



# Women's Space

## JCA WOMEN'S COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Submitted by Pam Powell, Chair

The Women's Committee of the Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA) continues to work within the framework of its 5-Year Action Plan.

The Committee submits articles on women's issues in the "Women's Space" of the JCA In Focus Newsletter. The following articles were submitted:

### August, 1999 - Part II of Why Are Women So Tired? By June Rogers.

This article dealt with some of the physical conditions that may be the reason for some women feeling fatigued.

### November, 1999 - Mary Secole: The Jamaican Nightingale

This article was about Mary Secole a contemporary of Florence Nightingale, who practiced as a nurse in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### February, 2000 - Mary Church Terrell

In keeping with the theme of Black History Month, Mary Church Terrell was featured. She was a writer, lecturer, organizer and demonstrator. Born in luxury, her entire life was devoted to the fight for equality.

### Black History Month Celebration

JCA celebrated Black History Month on February 18, 2000 with the successful launch of the video: "Strong Jamaicans, Stirring Times" - A History of Organized Labour in Jamaica. Members of the Women's Committee were represented on the committee that

organized the official launch of the video.

### International Women's Day Celebration

On March 8, the Committee participated in International Women's Day Celebrations sponsored by the Women's Intercultural Network (WIN). At this event, Sandra Carnegie-Douglas, a member of the Women's Committee and past Vice-President of the JCA, was the recipient of the Vara P. Singh award. This award is given annually to an outstanding woman whose volunteer contributions have enhanced the lives of women within her own or in diverse communities in Metropolitan Toronto.

On March 19, the JCA Women's Committee held its own International Women's Day Celebration. The theme was "Women Recognizing Women". Our guest speaker was Dr. Inez Elliston who spoke on the "Value of Women Recognizing Women". The Committee honoured thirty JCA women for their outstanding contributions to the organization and the community. The awardees were presented with certificates of recognition. It was a very successful event with over 100 in attendance.

### Other Activities

Committee members continue to practice public speaking through the use of table topics. Some of the topics were "Year of the Older Person" and "Empowerment of Women".

The Committee arranged guest speakers for alternate quarterly meetings. Kathy Nelson of the recently formed Caribbean Chapter of the Canadian Diabetes Association was the guest speaker at the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

On September 23, 1999 the Committee hosted the Alzheimer Society Coffee Break for the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

We continue to support Eva's Place particularly at Christmas with donations of clothing, toiletries and cosmetics for the residents. We also continue to donate to the P.A.C.E. annual toy drive.

Currently both the Women's Committee Chair and Vice-Chair are on the Planning Committee for the Annual General Meeting in May.

## Internet Sites

Submitted by Claudette Cameron-Stewart

**Know@globalserve.net**  
Afrocentric bookstore

**www.Flayva.com**  
Magazine about the Caribbean

**ww.luna.cas.usf.edu/~alaing/jfolk.html**  
Jamaican Folklore

**www.cricketnext.com/**  
For Cricket Lovers

**www.homeviewjamaica.com**  
Soap Opera Lovers - Jamaica's Own Soap

# Seniors Take Parliament Hill

It was a trip and a first-hand lesson in "grey power" they would not soon forget.

In March, nine members of the Caribbean Canadian Seniors Club went to Ottawa to join a multicultural rally against splitting the health care system into public and private. They met hundreds from a cross-section of Canadian society, and they each got to discuss concerns with a Member of Parliament.

For most of the seniors on the trip, it was their first time in grassroots activism.

"I never spoke to an MP in Parliament building before," declared Lydia Thompson, who got to speak to Liberal

MP Charles Caccia of Davenport. "I told him that the cost is too much when you have to pay \$100 per year to get free prescriptions, then still have to pay on top of that for some prescriptions."

Amy Nelson, chair of the CCSC and leader of the contingent, met with none other than Paul Martin, the Minister of Finance and MP for LaSalle—Emard.

"I found him a charming, pleasant and personable person," Amy said with a laugh. She told him what she told others at the rally organized by the Ontario Coalition for Senior

Citizens and Pensioners: "when you have public and private health care, the best resources will naturally shift towards the richer private care system, leaving the public system struggling. As the public system is used primarily by poorer Canadians, including many seniors and minorities, they will suffer the most from a 'Klein-type' two-tier system" (being promoted by Alberta's premier Ralph Klein).

"I've see it in many Third World countries where you have to bring your own linen, your own nourishment, and even your own people to come and help you in hospital," said Amy, who has been an international health care volunteer for more than 20 years. "People go in debt when their loved ones need care - you want the best for them so you mortgage your house to get them the help."

The Caribbean Seniors appear to be the only Black contingent at the rally, and Amy adds that it is important for more of them to get out to these kinds of functions.

"You can't just sit back and say it doesn't matter. You need to go out and get involved. We need to be seen and heard."

## Capital Fundraising Report

Submitted by Erma Collins, Chair

**Your Help Is Still Needed:** Let us put this up front, since we are still looking for responses from members. The Capital Fundraising Committee has developed an informative presentation kit, for businesses in particular. We now need introductions. Set up a meeting for us with your employer or someone you know in a business; tell us about it; we will be there to make the pitch. Business people, including those from our community, do not generally respond when they receive solicitations out of the cold from people they do not know. We need your help.

**Returns From Recent Events:** The Merritone Dance of January 29 netted \$13,646. The Boonoonoonos Brunch of February 20 netted \$16,091, which includes \$8,325 in donations. The donations included two large ones:

\$2,000 from Kamala Jean Gopie and \$5,000 from Pamela Appelt. We thank all our supporters and our donors for the encouragement. If we add the \$29,737 reported today to the \$72,951 reported last time, it means that the committee has raised \$102,688 during the last year.

**Next Event:** We are looking forward to your supporting the sub-committee that is putting on the golf tournament on August 26.

Erma Collins, Paul Barnett, Vincent Conville, Delores Lawrence, Lelia McKenzie, Buddy McIntosh, Ezra Nesbeth, Lana Salmon-Jones, Herman Stewart, Sandra Whiting and Patricia Williams.

### Jamaican Canadian Association

Introduces the

### **DISTRESS FUND**

*Helping those who need it in Canada and around the World*

*Please support this fund by donating to Royal Bank Account Number 107-651-2, Transit Number 06702-003*

*Or directly to the JCA at 995 Arrow Road, Toronto, Ontario, M9M 2Z5 416-746-5772*



# Executive Director's Report

## JCA Part of new anti-racism coalition

About 20 Black organizations from across Canada, including the Jamaican Canadian Association, have formed a coalition to prepare for the first United Nations World Conference Against Racism (to be held in South Africa in 2001).

The African-Canadian Coalition Against Racism (ACCAR), spearheaded by the African Canadian Legal Clinic, wants to ensure that the full picture of anti-Black racism in Canada gets on the UN conference agenda. ACCAR's plans include preparing a shadow report, establishing a Website, raising awareness of the conference among African Canadian communities the length and breadth of the country, and lobbying the government.

The JCA currently chairs the communications committee of the ACCAR Working Group. The key mandate of the committee will be to establish the networks and prepare the materials to ensure that the Working

Groups' activities and messages reach all interested parties.

For more information on ACCAR, please contact me, (Elaine Thompson) at 416-746-5772, ext. 224.

**Staff Changes:** I am pleased to welcome **Errol Bonner** to the JCA as the new ISAP counsellor. His profile appears in this issue of *In Focus*. We also say goodbye to **Stephnie Payne, Rudy Sanchez and Lisa Chin Quee**.

We are currently looking for a parenting officer to provide individual and group counselling to parents, operate a parenting hotline and conduct educational sessions for service providers. Please contact me for more information.

**Website:** The JCA's Website [www.jcassoc.com](http://www.jcassoc.com) is on-line, and we are continually adding content. Anyone interested in advertising on our site may give me a call, or e-mail me at [elaine@jcassoc.org](mailto:elaine@jcassoc.org) for

more information.

**Interactive citizenship drama:** The JCA has joined with the University Presbyterian Church and Theatre in the Rough in promoting a play that explores issues about citizenship – Why Vote? Why become a Canadian Citizen? The play, **"Togetherness is Strength for Effective Citizenship"** will be held on two nights – Friday, May 12, and Friday, May 26, starting at 7:00 p.m., at the University Presbyterian Church, corner of Finch and Dufferin.

**CBC Radio seeks stories:** CBC Radio has a program, *First Person Singular*, consisting of personal essays about life changing moments, written and read on the air by people who submit them. The producer is seeking multicultural voices for this program. The stories can be sad, funny, serious or whimsical. They can be about anything from birth to death, from learning to read to singing with elephants. The only rules are that they must be true, must be between 500 and 1,000 words and must be from the writer's own experience. E-mail Karen Levine at [klevine@toronto.cbc.ca](mailto:klevine@toronto.cbc.ca) or contact me at 416-5772 ext. 224 for more information.

## Letter From the Consul-General

Dear Fellow Jamaicans,

I am pleased to invite you to a community forum with Senator The Honourable Maxine Henry-Wilson, Minister of Information, at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2000, at Metro Hall Toronto, 55 John Street (Corner of King Street West and John Street).

There have been many positive and new developments in Jamaica recently and the Minister will be pleased to share Page 8

these with the Jamaican community here in Toronto. Therefore, I am encouraging as many nationals as possible to come and have dialogue with her, as she brings us up to date on the several Millennium Projects scheduled towards Jamaica's development and successful entry into the new century.

Please encourage your fellow

Jamaicans to come out and hear the Minister.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,  
Herman G. LaMont  
Consul General

**Contributed by The Jamaica Information Service**

# Epilepsy Toronto Launches Outreach into Caribbean Community

Submitted by Robin Rowe, Epilepsy Association

Epilepsy is common—1 in every 100 people has a seizure disorder, also known as epilepsy. Most people have well-controlled epilepsy, whereas others have more severe cases and more frequent seizures. Still surrounded by myths and stigma, epilepsy remains a largely hidden and often misunderstood condition. *Here is the story of one Jamaican mother:*

**"I don't even blink:** Confessions of the Mother of a Child with Epilepsy by Iola Harris  
My epilepsy story begins in 1995, when my son Tristen was in kindergarten. The school called and told me that Tristen had "passed out".

**"Epilepsy": we had never used that word before.** We didn't know what it meant. I'm from the West Indies and in my family background, we had had no experience with epilepsy. Tristen was taken to Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital. After a while my husband and I were told that Tristen was fine. As we drove away from the hospital, Tristen turned in my lap, his eyes rolling and his limbs flailing all over the place. **I began screaming!!** My husband stopped the car in the middle of the road. We were both extremely upset and crying. My husband was in worse shape than I was! We had no idea what was going on with Tristen.

A lady came over to our car, looked at Tristen and very calmly said, "He's having a seizure."

**"A WHAT!?!"** We were beside ourselves with emotion. The lady drove us back to the hospital. My husband needed a glass of water

to calm down! The doctor assured me that my son's seizure had been an "isolated case"—he probably wouldn't have one again. Tristen was not put on any medication. I took great comfort in the fact that the doctor said it wouldn't happen again. Two years passed, and on May 29, 1997 while on a family vacation in Jamaica, Tristen had another seizure while playing with the other children. Once again, I freaked out.

In the initial stages I was totally confused. I opened the phone book and called around, seeking any information I could. Luckily I called the Epilepsy Association, Metro Toronto. Their social worker was very, very helpful.

Tristen is now on medication, which works very well. He has had only two seizures since 1997. Ironically, the latest was May 29, 1999, exactly two years to the day after the one he had while we were on vacation in Jamaica. Perhaps because it was an "anniversary" day I was somewhat on the lookout for a seizure that day and at 3:30 that morning Tristen asked for juice, and at 4:30 he had a seizure that lasted for about two minutes.

**Every day I live in fear that he will have another seizure.** I know I'm a bit extreme. I watch his every move, always running to see if he's okay. When he's alone in the bathroom, I call and check on him constantly. If he's been quiet for awhile, he sometimes yells, "Mom, I'm O.K." I figure

that I only have a couple more years before he will no longer let me monitor him so closely.

**I have two great fears.** The first is that my daughter Keiana will develop epilepsy, too. The Epilepsy Association says this is rare, but not impossible.

**My second is that something will happen to Tristen in his sleep. After hearing of Olympic sprinter Flo Jo's death from a seizure, I didn't sleep for a week. Tristen still sleeps in my bedroom and I watch him constantly. I never get more than two or three hours sleep at night.**

He's always supervised—**I don't even blink.** Tristen wants to be a basketball player—even though he's only four foot two—or else a doctor. I tell him that it will be a lot easier for him to become a doctor!!

**Tristen is a very bright, spunky child who sees no stigma to having epilepsy. He is the first one to tell you about his seizures. "I take medication. I'm epileptic you know," he announces proudly. He is a confident boy who does well at school and feels good about himself. He knows that he's not different from the other children, except for the occasional seizure.**

Epilepsy has really changed our lives. **Each day I get a little bit stronger.** People hold both negative and positive views about epilepsy. Some still believe that you should put a spoon in the mouth. They don't know *nothing*

Continued ...Page 10



# Tid-Bits

Submitted by Alton Telfer

Spring has sprung and Summer is within reach! Put away those heavy coats, big boots and say thank the Lord for a fairly good winter. GOOD, especially when compared to last year when our Mayor, Mel Lastman had to call in the Army! Those Army boys must have been relieved, knowing that nature took care of their task, this time around. I am hopeful that the summer will likewise be good and that you will enjoy it to the fullest.

Speaking of the weather; I was in Jamaica between January and February this year and especially at nights, I thought that it might be warmer in Toronto. Jamaica was unusually cold this year. This experience was in Kingston; therefore, one can imagine what it was like in Manchester. Does El Nino or La Nina have anything to do with these unusual climatic changes? So, say the experts!

Still in Jamaica, sometime last year I informed you through this medium that a "seat-belt" law was about to take effect throughout the country and I expressed my concern that the same disrespect towards the Drink-and-Drive law would be shown. Well, I beg to retract. During my stay, I was pleasantly surprized to see how conscientious and cooperative the people have been, both passengers and drivers. If you are offered a ride, most drivers will make sure you are properly buckled up before driving off. If this attitude is maintained the number of traffic accidents and hence fatalities should diminish substantially.

Did you know that JCA is into Golfing now? Yes, we are! At a previous

Quarterly Meeting, Messrs. Alvin Ffrench and Winston Earle made a presentation. It was unanimously agreed that this is the way to go and a committee comprising Erma Collins, Alvin Ffrench, Winston Earle, Jeff Patterson and myself was set up. As this is to be a major fundraising vehicle, a professional golf tournament organizer has been hired to work with the committee. Everything is going well and the **first Annual Tournament will be held on Saturday, August 26, 2000 at Bolton Golf and Country Club. This event will be followed by a Banquet and Awards presentation the following Saturday, September 2, 2000 at the JCA Centre.** Contact JCA at 416-746-5772 for information and registration forms. We are accepting Corporate Sponsorships so please encourage your company or any company you may be aware of to be a sponsor. You can contact any of the committee members or the JCA number above. A golf clinic is being held free of charge, every Thursday evening at the JCA for those who wish to learn.

The Black Community-Police Consultative Committee, on which I continue to be your representative, is still going strong. We met with Chief Julian Fantino shortly before he officially took office and conveyed to him, the community's expectations of him. We will try to meet with him from time to time to express any concerns affecting the Black community. Be reminded that the Toronto Police Force is still

recruiting young men and women for job opportunities. Persons interested in this career can contact Constable Charlene Edwards at 416-808-7064 or Jeff Patterson at BCPCC 416-635-2747.

Prepare yourself, Ma-Bell says soon you shall be dialing ten numbers instead of seven for a local call.

Once again, have a safe and enjoyable summer.

## Epilepsy...continued

should ever be put in the mouth of someone having a seizure.

When you hear the word epilepsy you should stop and listen, even if it doesn't affect you now. It can happen to anybody. The more you know about epilepsy the more you realize that it's not as bad as it seems. Our family is very open about Tristen's epilepsy, which has helped a lot. I've learned that once you start talking about it, you hear about many cases in the community. Epilepsy is very common. The more questions you ask, the more you talk about it, the more you learn, the more you accept it and the less scary it becomes. I am eager to talk to other people, especially people from the West Indian community, who have been through this. It's important that we reach out to one another and share our experiences. I believe there is strength in numbers. *Don't you?*

**First Aid for Seizure Victims:** 1. Remain Calm. Let the seizure run its course. 2. Protect the person from further injury. 3. **Do not put anything in the person's mouth.** 4. Roll the person on to their side. 5. If the seizure lasts more than 5 minutes or repeats, call 911.

Continued...Page 11

## LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

JCA Mother's Day Brunch  
Sunday, May 14, JCA Centre

AGM Community Open House  
Friday, May 26, 6:00- 9:00 p.m.  
JCA Centre

AGM Seminars -  
Dialogue on Immigration  
Coping with Stress  
Saturday, May 27, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon  
JCA Centre

AGM Business Meeting  
Saturday, May 27, 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.  
JCA Centre

Seniors' Yard Sale  
Saturday, June 3, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
JCA Centre

Weekend Heritage Tour to  
Underground Railroad  
Saturday, July 1 - 2, 2000  
Detroit USA - Depart JCA 7:00 a.m.

Annual JCA Outing  
Niagara Falls, Ontario  
Sunday July 9,

Flag Raising Ceremony  
Toronto City Hall  
Sunday, August 6

Independence Church Service  
Place to be decided  
Sunday, August 6

Independence Dinner/Dance  
JCA Centre  
Saturday, August 12

JCA's "Yes-We-Can" Golf  
Tournament  
Bolton Golf & Country Club  
Saturday, August 26  
Starting at 8:00 a.m.

Quarterly Membership Meeting  
JCA Centre  
Sunday, August 27 at 2:00 p.m.

Golf Dinner/Dance Awards  
Presentation  
JCA Centre  
Saturday, September 02

Official Car Raffle Draw  
JCA Centre  
Saturday, September 09

JCA's Seniors Dinner  
JCA Centre  
Sunday, September 24

## Epilepsy...continued

That's Iola and Tristen's story. Epilepsy Toronto has been providing information, counselling, public advocacy on behalf of people living with epilepsy and their families for more than forty years. Epilepsy affects people of all ages, races and cultures. Reaching out to all people with epilepsy in the Afro and Caribbean communities and delivering culturally appropriate services is

a challenge that Epilepsy Toronto is determined to meet in the year 2000.

For more information, call  
*Epilepsy Toronto today at (416) 964-9095 or, if you or someone you know has epilepsy.*

## QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

In our November issue of *In Focus* a Questionnaire was included. Please see the results below. We have taken your suggestions seriously and have started to incorporate them. We will continue to incorporate them in an attempt to encourage everyone to enjoy the newsletter. Please feel free to respond to the Editorial committee on any of the issues in the newsletter. **Your comments, opinions and articles are ALWAYS welcomed.** The committee can be contacted at 416-746-5772 ext. 260.

### Survey Results:

- Ques. 1: 73% like the current style 27% don't
- Ques. 2: 73% like paper quality 27% don't
- Ques. 3: 68% like paper colour 31% other colours
- Ques. 4: Various topics were suggested and some have since been incorporated
- Ques. 5: 33% prefer less committee reports. 52% more \*
- Ques. 6: 68% find the present style easy to read. 22% don't \*
- Ques. 7: 98% want most things to stay in\*
- Ques. 8: 77% would read more if there were more articles 22% wouldn't change
- Ques. 9: All ages read, with the 45-55 age group being the highest
- Ques. 10: Many suggestions were made regarding how to distribute the newsletter
- Ques. 11: Additional suggestions included "letters from readers"; Success and Achievement stories.

\* less than 100% due to some no comments.



# Cook's Corner

Submitted by Claudette  
Cameron-Stewart

## Jamaican Pepperpot Soup Ingredients

1½ lbs stewing steak (beef)  
12 oz pork tripe {entrails} (if you  
eat pork – if not, use salted  
(pickled) beef)  
8 oz callaloo  
2 lbs kale (or any Chinese greens  
or spinach)  
12 okras  
1 medium onion  
2-3 pieces of escallion  
1 whole green scotch bonnet  
pepper (more if you can handle it)  
2 – 3 cloves garlic  
Thyme (to your liking)  
½ cup coconut milk  
Salt and black pepper (to your  
taste)

## Method

Wash all ingredients before you  
start.

Cut up pork (if being used). Cut  
up callaloo, kale, okras, onions,  
escallion, and crush garlic.  
(Keep the pepper whole –  
unless you really like HOT!))

Place the steak (beef) and pork  
(if being used) in a large pot  
covered with water. Bring to a  
boil and then simmer for 30  
minutes or until meat is tender.  
Place the callaloo, kale and  
okra in another pan with a small  
amount of water. Cover and  
steam for 10 minutes. Add this  
mixture to the soup.

Add the onion, escallion,  
pepper, garlic and thyme. Add  
whole pepper. Continue to boil.  
If soup is too thick, add some  
more water. Let simmer for  
another hour. Remove pepper.  
Add coconut milk; season to  
taste with salt and pepper and  
cook for a further 5 minutes.  
Serve hot.

# Jamaican Canadian Association

Presents

The First Annual - **GOLF  
CLASSIC TOURNAMENT**

at

Bolton Golf and Country  
Club

Bolton, Ontario

on

Saturday, August 26, 2000.

T-Off at 8:00 a.m.

Banquet and Presentation  
Ceremony

to be held at JCA Centre on  
Sat., September 2, 2000.

**PLAYERS WANTED**

Contact JCA Office

**(416) 746-5772**

# Candidates...continued

Canada Pageant, Miss Black Ontario  
Pageant and Miss Caribbean Canada  
pageant. She was the President of the  
Board of Directors for Glen Garden  
Housing Co-op located on Jane Street,  
for 4 consecutive terms. Karen has  
chaired the Membership, Social and  
Planning Committee of the Housing Co-  
op. Karen would like to serve her  
community by working with the  
membership with a view to increasing  
the membership.

## Julie Spence

I have been involved in numerous

community activities over the years  
including being President and  
Founder, Spelling Bee of Canada,  
Youth Director, The Canadian and  
Caribbean Excelsior Fraternal  
Association, Special Event, John  
Brooks Scholarship Foundation. I  
sing and I am a member of First  
Choice Ladies Band.

I would like to work with  
individuals interested in increasing  
membership.

The Editorial Committee would like  
to thank the following places for  
agreeing to distribute JCA's  
newsletter.

City Hall – Toronto  
Knowledge Bookstore, Brampton  
GEM West Indian Grocery &  
Take Out Restaurant, Brampton  
Nicey's, Pickering  
Nicey's, Brampton

Please let the committee know if  
you have places that will display  
the newsletter.